(69)

mmut Grove, the heroism of a battle-field incident, and the brutality of survivors of the Titanic clubbing swimmers with their oars. For every reaction there is seemingly also its opposite and, although Wolfenstein offers hypotheses for all, one would be hard put to predict one or the other alternative in advance.

The psychologist unacquainted with the growing disaster literature will be surprised at what people do under disaster conditions. Pictures of panic are highly unrealistic. The "disaster syndrome" of apathetic withdrawal from the situation is only part of the scientific prediction. Wolfenstein covers threat (distant and imminent, denied and overestimated), impact (in its "aloneness," "near-miss" survival and other aspects), and the many facets of disaster aftermath. In doing so she offers data and interpretations on behavior which are increasingly becoming a focus for the attention of psychologists. From the work of Selye on physiological mechanisms in stress reaction to the two recent books by Festinger on cognitive dissonance, there is a spread of research and theory that is directly pertinent to our understanding of disaster behavior. More books in this broad area are in press. Wolfenstein's book makes a timely contribution to this area of inquiry that slices across most of the domain of psychology.

Concepts re a Concept

Dale B. Harris (Ed.)

The Concept of Development: An Issue in the Study of Human Behavior. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957. Pp. x + 287. $4.75.

Reviewed by R. W. SPERRY

Dr. Sperry has, since 1954, been Hixon Professor of Psychobiology at the California Institute of Technology. After a doctorate in zoology at the University of Chicago, he was associated in research with Karl Lashley at the Yerkes Laboratories of Primate Biology for five years, and then he taught neuropsychology and neuroanatomy at the University of Chicago for five years more. He has been especially interested in the development of the nervous system as the organ of perception, learning, and memory and in the reorganization of the nervous system in regeneration.

THIS book is the published version of a conference held at the University of Minnesota in 1955 to recognize the 30th anniversary of the University's Institute of Child Welfare. The concern of the conference was not with any special aspect of development nor with development in general, but rather with the concept of *development per se*, particularly with the concept defined as a temporal process involving the organization of elemental parts into larger functional units or 'wholes.' Following an introductory survey by the editor, the sixteen authors, representing a wide gamut of disciplines including philosophy, biology, psychology, anthropology, languages, medicine, history, social science, and education, discuss individually the use and meaning of the concept of development and related problems in their respective fields. Open discussion is not reported.

The rationale behind the conference plan may be found in part in the strong 'interdisciplinary' trend of a few years ago and especially in the movement for a General System Theory, stemming back to the writings of Bertalanffy and others. The editor indicates that there was no pressure or plan to demonstrate the unity of science on a physicalist basis, nor to expound general system theory; yet one wonders if, in the planning at least, there was not hope that some greater concern would be given these matters than the majority of participants actually gave.

A few of the authors devote the b of their papers to the more sema and philosophic aspects of the con ence subject. The others tend to pense with these matters in their in ductory paragraphs or by occasio later reference, thus freeing themse for more substantial contributions the understanding of developme phenomena that pertain to their gi area.

In their own rights the individ chapters are largely of high quality. T gether they make a collection that somewhat heterogeneous even by 'int disciplinary' standards, and it may questioned whether, in this book, t global properties of the whole are useful as its parts. Those who conte that a unification of science is possib through general laws that hold equal for all levels of organization from ato to galaxy may be prompted to searc the book for some skeletal essence the developmental concept that will ap ply to all systems.

On the other hand, those who believ that all phenomena can be analyzed an explained ultimately in physicochemica terms will find encouragement in Erne Nagel's chapter on *Determinism an Development*. Here Nagel challenge the doctrine which asserts that globa properties appearing in the evolution o a hierarchically organized system ca never be reduced to, nor explained by the properties of the elementary parts He claims, on the contrary, that the novel, emergent properties can be explained and predicted in principle, provided one has a proper theory both for the given system and for the particular phenomena in question. He cautions however, that there is no a priori proof that an adequate theory can always be found, nor plausible ground for supposing that man will some day construct a final unifying theory that will account for every phenomenon ever manifested.

The philosophical mind never wishes to win an argument, but rather the truth.

—DAGOBERT D. RUNES